



Options Update

**Spring
2006**

*Partnering with people with disabilities and their communities
to bring about self-directed and fulfilled lives.*

**This Issue's
Focus:
Annual Meeting**

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Annual Picnic
Saturday, August 5
Karst Farm Park

Options Hosts 2006 Annual Meeting

Options for Better Living hosted its 2006 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 26, at The Mayfields Ballroom in Bloomington. The agency held a short business meeting at 5 p.m., when members cast their votes for the new slate of Options Board of Directors. The newest additions to the Board of Directors include: Carla McGee, Sophia Travis, Christine Geary, and Ellen Mufson. Brian O'Neill and Karen Conner were reelected to the Board after serving three-year terms.

After an hors d'oeuvres reception, guests listened to a keynote address by John Di Frances, a professional speaker and expert on the subject of organizational leadership, innovation, and synergy. The highlight of the evening came when Board President Brian O'Neill announced the customers, staff, Board members, and donors who received awards for their honorable contributions to the organization and its mission.

The following individuals and organizations received Options' top awards for their valuable contributions to the agency:

Retiring Board Members – Bob Magee, Fred Roedl, Kimberly Ruff, and Lori Crossley

Dan Day Employee of the Year Memorial Award – Paula Horen, who was selected for making Options' customers' dreams come true, for promoting the organization, and for relentlessly working to ensure that the agency's customers have self-directed and fulfilled lives.

Lois Edwards Memorial Award – Karen Petty and Susanne Deckard. Ms. Petty and Ms. Deckard were both nominated for their commitment to setting and achieving goals, holding community jobs, and for their upbeat, positive attitudes toward life.

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Karen Petty (with Direct Service Professional Allison Martin) and Susanne Deckard receive their awards from Options' Executive Director Susan Rinne.

From the Executive Director

Susan Rinne

On April 26 we celebrated our fiscal year, 2005. This has been a great year for Options in many ways. We raised more money locally than ever before with the help of all the chocoholics in our communities. The 9th Annual Chocolate Fest and the 2nd Annual Art of Chocolate raised over \$34,000. Through the hard work of Options' advocates and customers, the Monroe County Council approved a \$300,000 appropriation for the agency beginning in January 2006. These funds will be used to stabilize the agency against current and future Medicaid cuts and provide much needed respite services to families on the waiting list for Waiver services. We implemented new systems within the agency to track and assign staff more effectively, providing more time for customer service oversight. With a more stable funding base, more efficient systems, and better service quality, Options is well positioned for the future.

This year we will start our strategic planning process. By taking stock of our strengths and weaknesses, reviewing our history, understanding trends in the industry, and getting input from all our key stakeholders, Options will design goals and strategies to take us to 2009. Some of the predictions (*ANCOR Newsletter*, May 2006) from people in the know include:

- * A very different worker demographic as our labor force changes.
- * Cost/benefit of services will play a greater role in who gets what; services will move more and more to outcome-based funding.
- * Fewer, but larger, organizations may exist to get better economies of scale, the "Wal-Mart Effect."
- * Funding will continue to decline and government will continue to extract itself from service delivery.
- * Cost sharing will increase as more and more families are asked to pay something for the services they receive.
- * Tax exemption for nonprofits will be questioned as government views this as a way to increase income without increasing taxes.

These predictions are frightening only if we do not address them through a thoughtful planning process. In February 2007, Options will celebrate 25 years of providing innovative services to people with disabilities in South Central Indiana. The next 25 years will see just as many changes as the last. Now is the time to plan and to act! If you want to be involved or just learn more about strategic planning at Options, contact me at srinne@optionsfbl.com.

Annual Meeting *(continued from page 1)*

Certificates of Merit – Michelle Webster, Lisa Van Deventer, and Lori Schopmeyer

Employer of the Year – City of Bloomington Utilities, which was



City of Bloomington Utilities representative Thomas H. Staley accepts the award for Employer of the Year from Rinne.

selected due to their substantial commitment to hiring people with disabilities. In addition to the Utility Department's dedication, the Mayor of Bloomington even made a pledge to hire a number of people with disabilities across city government.

Volunteer of the Year – Becky Wann, who was nominated after helping to create Options' Art of Chocolate event, and for taking initiative on many of Options' fundraising projects.

Those receiving honorable mention include:

Employer of the Year Honorable Mention – Goodwill Industries (West and East), and Burger King

(West, East, and South)

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Rinne with Volunteer of the Year Becky Wann, who worked hard to make the Art of Chocolate a success.

A Success Story: Achieving Gainful Employment

Customer Focus: Christopher Schaaf

The following article was contributed by Linda and Larry Schaaf, whose son, Christopher Schaaf, receives services from Options.

Receiving a high school diploma and acquiring the skills necessary for lifelong employment were goals Christopher Schaaf and his family expressed to his school transition planning team.

“From the time Chris was in grade school to graduation, he accomplished more than ever thought because his teachers gave him good support, and we never stopped supporting him,” said his mother, Linda Schaaf.

Chris graduated in 1996 from Warren Central High School in Indianapolis with his diploma and paid employment. Along the way, many people and services assisted Chris with his employment goals.

Chris’ school blended his daily schedule, allowing him to attend academic classes in the morning and vocational education programs in the afternoon. In his junior and senior

years of high school, Chris experienced a variety of paid part-time jobs. Because of these work experiences, Chris was able to make a very clear choice that he didn’t enjoy restaurant employment. He graduated in 1996 with a paid part-time job at the IU Medical Center in Indianapolis. In addition to school supports, Chris received support from Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the job coaching services of Noble of Indiana. He also received additional income from Social Security Income benefits (SSI). Each service was in place by the beginning of Chris’ senior year of high school and made it possible for him to transition smoothly from high school to the working world.

“Yes, there were ups and downs; it seems more downs after school. We didn’t give up. We felt every goal



Christopher Schaaf

and every dream had to be Chris’,” said Mrs. Schaaf. “One day he reached a goal when we moved from Indianapolis to Bloomington. We found Options for Better Living, and Chris found his goal at Kroger. They also helped him find golf.”

Chris’ father, Larry, adds, “The beauty of Options supporting Chris is their way is so much less intrusive. His job coaches over the years have put themselves up front, but Options coaches did just the opposite. They are truly there to support you, not lead you.”

Chris now has a full-time job with the Kroger West grocery store in Bloomington. “He has work, benefits, vacations, and most of all, support from Options, co-workers, and his family. He has learned to never let go of his dreams,” Mrs. Schaaf said.

Options’ employment specialists, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Indiana Works Benefits counselor and the Support Services Waiver are key supports for Chris, and as a result, he no longer receives SSI benefits.

Annual Meeting *(continued from page 2)*

Volunteer of the Year Honorable Mention – Brittany Cripe

Justin Post, and Matt Pyatte

Dan Day Employee of the Year Memorial Award Honorable Mention – Phillip White, Steven Schwing, Barbara Sandage, Sandy McKamey, Letitia Llewellyn, Kris Lake, Rachel Howard, Jaqueline Guntzel, Sharon Enochs, Teresa Day, Deema Dabis, Stacie Christenberry, Victoria Burke, and the team of Beth Flanigan, Julie Guarnari, Amanda Cassidy, Theresa Dovenbarger, April Sims-Clark,

Lois Edwards Memorial Award Honorable Mention – Dennis Heyen

Options also recognized its many employees celebrating their first, second and 10th anniversary years with the organization, as well as all of its wonderful donors who have helped Options achieve its dreams.

Thanks to everyone for making this evening a successful event!



Dennis Heyen receives his honorable mention award from Rinne

Meet Options' 2006 Employees of the Month

On the first Tuesday of each month, Options' Leadership Team members vote for Employee of the Month. The team includes staff and customers. Nominations for Employee of the Month are accepted until meeting time (10 a.m.), and may be picked up at the front desk at the Bloomington office. Everyone connected with Options can and is encouraged to nominate an employee.



Reynolds

Our January Employee of the Month was Service Manager **Angelique Reynolds**. Angelique was nominated by Employee Development Coordinator Jillian East. Jillian said

Angelique is dedicated to her job, has great relationships with her customers, and works late often to get everything done.

Our February Employee of the Month was Afternoon Receptionist Michel "Micki" Poole. Micki was nominated by Options Board member Becky Wann. Becky said that



Poole

Micki loves her job and it shows through her dedication, skill, and by the way she cheerfully greets everyone.

Our March Employee of the Month was Service Coordinator Paula Horen. Paula was nominated by Service Manager Lori Nei, who works with Paula at the Bedford

office. Lori said that Paula, who she describes as hardworking and dedicated, is an excellent role model for her staff and other Service Coordinators. Paula was also named Employee of the Year at the Options Annual Meeting.



Horen

Our April Employee of the Month was Service Coordinator Linda Mullins. Linda was nominated by Assistant Director of Services Danie Norris. Danie said that Linda is a great leader for Net-



Mullins

work 1 who always demonstrates the mission and values of Options. She adds that Linda goes above and beyond for the customers she supports—often filling in when staff are unable to work their shifts.

Our May Employee of the Month was Carole Scifres, RN. Carole was nominated by Human Resources Manager Barbara Sandage. Barbara describes Carole as a caring, dedicated health professional who is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one training to staff in addition to monitoring the health of our customers.



Scifres

Congratulations to all of these outstanding Options employees!

Options, Parks & Recreation to Build New Accessible Playground

At the Annual Picnic at Karst Farm Park, which is set for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, August 5,



This stationary cyclist is an example of accessible playground equipment. (Photo courtesy of Landscape Structures.)

customers, family members, and staff will have an opportunity to voice opinions about what they would like to see in a soon-to-be-built accessible playground. This new playground will be located in the park, and Monroe County Parks & Recreation representatives are encouraging input on equipment.

According to the National Center on Accessibility, play is an essential component in both the

lives of children and adults, as it effects physical, mental, emotional, and social well being. If you are interested in joining the committee that will make this dream a reality, please contact Melissa Copas at 1-800-875-9615, ext. 218, or mcopas@optionsfbl.com.

LEAP Provides Opportunities for Growth

Options' recently began a new service called LEAP (Life Enrichment Activities & Participation). Our new LEAP service expands Options' independent living and community presence so that people with disabilities have the opportunity to achieve their goals.

Currently, Service Manager Matt Brookshire is conducting our LEAP program. These classes and activities cover a variety of topics including computers, cooking, swimming, music, tour club, walking group, arts and crafts, movie club, lunch group, photography, acting, yoga, park concert/lunch group, gardening, and health and wellness. To be eligible to participate, you must have a defined source of funding and hours available within that funding source.

All of the classes are conducted outside the Options' office except the computer and health and wellness classes. Other venues include the Banneker Community Center (yoga and cooking), Willie Streeter Community Garden (gardening), Bloomington YMCA (walking group and swimming), People's Park (concert/lunch group), and the Bloomington Adult Community Center (photography, acting, music and arts and crafts). In addition, the lunch group patronizes Bloomington area restaurants, and the tour group has visited police departments, fire stations, museums, greenhouses, the Monroe County Humane Society, and IU's football stadium and Assembly Hall. The walking group has also been to IU Assembly Hall, plus the College Mall, various parks, Rails to Trails, and the YMCA. LEAP is a great way for our customers to get out in the community! Matt wishes to thank the many people who have shown their support by welcoming LEAP participants.

Classes are on a three-month rotation (March-May, June-August, September-November, and December-February). Participants must complete a registration form, and these forms are available at the Bloomington office.

Matt encourages Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) to participate in LEAP classes and activities. Often, our DSPs struggle to find places to take customers, and LEAP classes and activities provide a great way to learn, and to make friends while being active in the community.

Matt says he is honored to have been chosen to lead this new service. Although it is difficult to conduct classes outside our facility, Matt said the cooking class in particular has been very successful.

As the service grows, Matt believes that his role will become more managerial. He is actively seeking

key people in the community who can provide specific skills and expertise for the various classes and activities. Volunteers from the community will also be welcomed as the service expands.

For more information about Options' LEAP service, contact Matt Brookshire at 1-800-875-9615, ext. 229 or mbrookshire@optionsfbl.com. (See page 6 for the LEAP Summer Classes Schedule.)



LEAP computer class participants

Matt Brookshire Leads LEAP

Matt Brookshire is the new Service Manager of our new LEAP Service, but he is not new to the field. Matt has worked with other day programs where he was named Employee of the Year in 1996. Matt continued to work in the field for a couple of years before moving to North Carolina. Upon his return to Bloomington, Matt began working in electronics for PTS until he was laid off. Matt then decided to return to the field at Options. He plans to pursue a degree in mechanical drafting and assistive technology. Matt is a member of a local band, and he enjoys photography. Other interests include exploring the countryside, and Matt recently visited the Leonard Springs Wetlands.



Options Expands Respite Service

“Respite” refers to short-term, temporary support provided to people with disabilities so that their families can take a break from the daily routine of care giving.

Raising a child with disabilities can be a very rewarding experience, yet it can also be a very exhausting task. Parents often have to forfeit their sleep, give up time for themselves, have difficulty finding time to spend with their other children, and have little or no time left to nurture their marriage. When a parent becomes consumed and overwhelmed with caring for their special child, the

There are 500 families waiting for respite services in South Central Indiana.

child’s well-being may be at risk as well as the parents.’

Respite care is a service that takes the child’s and parents’ welfare into account; it serves to preserve the family and lessen the pressures that may lead to institutionalization, divorce, neglect, or child abuse.

Options has been providing respite services for over 20 years. This year,

Options is able to enhance the service and offer support to families who do not currently have funding or who do not have adequate support. Respite is a service that is available from infancy to adulthood.

Eligibility: Families can be eligible either based on disability or income and disability. Monies may be limited and Options staff will work with families to match their needs to available funding.

Funding sources:

1) Family Subsidy (FS) — This is a state grant for those families whose children are eligible under guidelines by the Indiana Bureau on Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS). There is no income requirement, but funding is limited. Services are available in Monroe, Lawrence, Owen and Greene counties.

2) County and Neighborhood Assistance Program — Options secures additional funding through local donations and county support to supplement respite services. This funding supports families with low incomes, who have children with disabilities who do not meet BDDS criteria, or who need more than covered under the FS program. Income eligibility is based on guidelines from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. Families must provide annual income information. County funding is limited to those in Monroe County. Families may be required to contribute to the cost of the service through a sliding fee scale.

For more information about our respite services, contact Beth Flanigan at 1-800-875-9615, ext. 202 or bflanigan@optionsfbl.com.

Meet Our Assistant Director for Family Services



Options’ new Assistant Director of Family Services Beth Flanigan has worked at Options for a total of six years, and has served as a service provider in Austin, Texas.

parents I have had contact with so far have seemed so grateful to be receiving the grant. My goal is to reach and sign up as many qualified families as the grant will allow.”

Beth earned a degree in radio and television from the University of Illinois before entering the social services field. She enjoys oil painting, sculpting and ceramics.

Beth says of her new role, “The

LEAP Summer Classes Schedule				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Yoga Banneker 9-10:15 a.m.	Gardening Community Garden 9-10 a.m.	Walking Group YMCA 9-10 a.m.	Photography BACC 9-10:30 a.m.	Gardening Community Garden 9-10 a.m.
Cooking Banneker 10:30 a.m.-Noon	YMCA 10:30-11 a.m.	Computer Options 10:30 a.m.-Noon	Swimming YMCA 10:45 a.m.-Noon	Tour Group Meet at Options 10:30 a.m.-Noon
Cooking Banneker (continued)	Lunch Concert People’s Park 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	Computer Options (continued)	Swimming YMCA (continued)	Tour Group (Community) (continued)
Lunch Banneker Noon-1 p.m.	Lunch Concert Bring Lunch (continued)	Lunch Bring Lunch Noon-1 p.m.	Lunch Bring Lunch Noon-1 p.m.	Tour Group Bring Lunch Noon-1 p.m.
Health & Wellness Options 1-2 p.m.	Acting BACC 1:30-3 p.m.	Music Banneker 1:30-3 p.m.	Music BACC 1-2 p.m.	Cooking Banneker 1:30-3 p.m.
Walking Group YMCA 2-3 p.m.	Acting (continued)	Music (continued)	Arts & Crafts BACC 2-3 p.m.	Cooking (continued)



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Our Vision

Options is a national leader in services to people with disabilities that result in active citizenship, rewarding employment, and fulfilling relationships within the community.

Our Mission

Options partners with people with disabilities and their communities to bring about self-directed and fulfilled lives.

Options Administrative Staff

Susan Rinne, Executive Director
Nancy Crandall, Chief Financial Officer
Danie Norris, Assistant Director of Services
Janessa Gerber, Assistant Director of Services
Beth Flanigan, Assistant Director of Family Services
Melissa Copas, Development Director

Options Update Editor

Evie Madsen, Executive Assistant

Options Update Mailing Volunteers

Members of
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
(RSVP)

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